

of meat [and the proteins on the surface of the pieces of meat are activated];

10 decreasing the pH of the [layer with] solubilized proteins by mixing an acidifying agent with the pieces of meat thereby selectively denaturing and coagulating the solubilized proteins such that the smaller pieces of meat are mutually joined but themselves substantially retain the properties of unprocessed
15 raw meat because proteins present in the smaller pieces of meat substantially do not denature, while holding the pieces of meat against each other to form the coherent piece of meat.

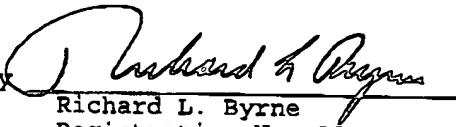
REMARKS

Claim 1 has been further amended to clarify how the proteins on the pieces of meat are treated. The deletions are believed to simplify the language. This amendment to claim 1 does not impact the patentability of claims 1, 3, 4, 9-12, and 14-20 over the cited references discussed in the Amendment filed October 27, 1999. Favorable action on the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully requested,

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